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Asia Pacific Center
for Justice and Peace

REPORT OF THE ECUMENICAL OBSERVER DELEGATION TO EAST TIMOR

August 21-September 8, 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the experiences of the Ecumenical Observer Delegation to East Timor, organized by the Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace. A non-profit advocacy organization based in Washington, DC, the Asia Pacific Center promotes the full range of human rights in partnership with secular and religious organizations across Asia. The Center has been active in the struggle for self-determination in East Timor since its founding in 1995, through membership in the National Council of Churches East Timor Working Group, several trips to East Timor, and hosting of prominent East Timorese, including Bishop Belo's first visit to Washington in June 1997.

While in East Timor in May-June 1999 during the Indonesian parliamentary elections, Executive Director Miriam A. Young witnessed the establishment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor, or UNAMET. In response to a request from the Protestant Church in East Timor (Gereja Kristen di Timor Timur, or GKTT), the Asia Pacific Center agreed to organize an ecumenical delegation from the United States to witness and observe the UN-supervised referendum on August 30.

Our delegation to East Timor included members of the National Council of Churches East Timor Working Group, along with representatives of other denominations. We were hosted by the GKTT and based in a house belonging to an Indonesian member of the church who had already left the territory. We were joined by observers from the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) and by several local Timorese families seeking refuge. Despite difficulties in transportation and logistics, we felt welcomed in Dili.

We never, however, felt secure. The main flaw in the May 5th trilateral agreement (see Appendix III) lay in granting Indonesia sole responsibility for security in East Timor before, during and after the referendum. This arrangement was blatantly violated by Indonesian authorities, who attempted to influence the referendum at all levels. Local militia, pro-independence and religious leaders all expressed certainty that the Indonesian military (TNI) provided the motivating force behind widespread intimidation and terror.

In the face of pervasive fear and violence, the people of East Timor cast their ballots in massive numbers on August 30 for the territory's future. Over 98% of registered voters turned out at the polling stations observed by the Asia Pacific Center delegation; similar numbers were recorded by United Nations staff throughout East Timor. The reverential atmosphere surrounding the vote reflected the admonitions of Bishop Belo and other religious leaders for the East Timorese to vote their conscience.

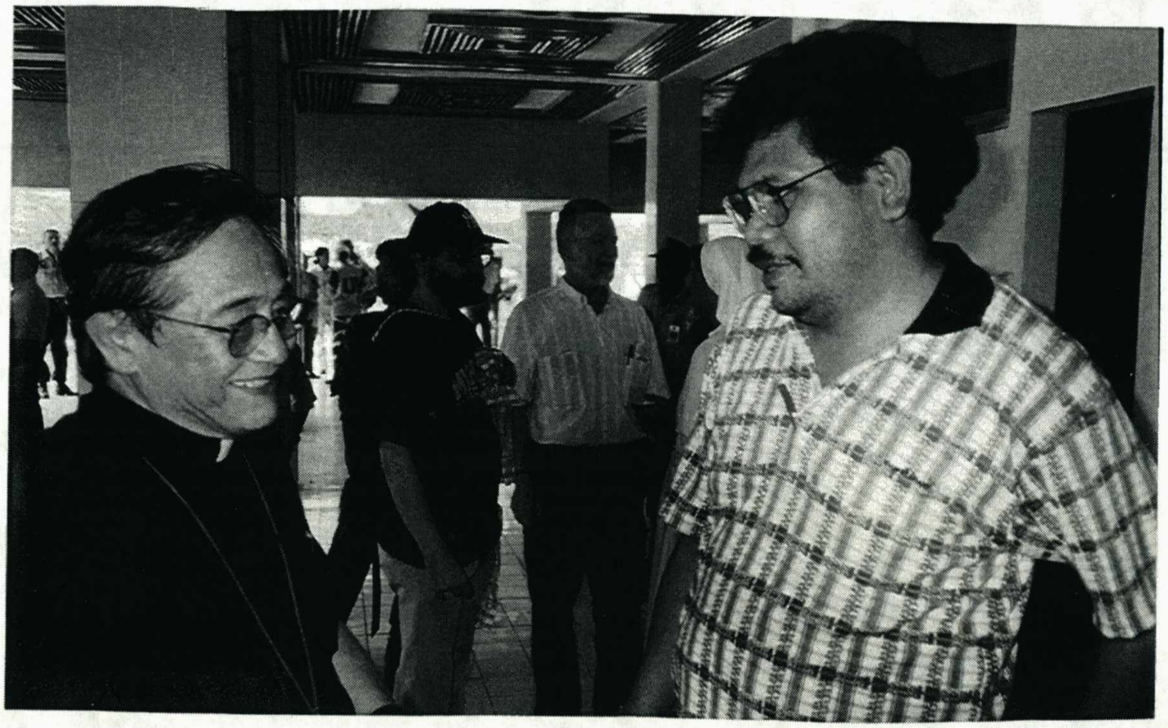
The delegation chose to concentrate its efforts in four districts of East Timor—Ermera, Liquica, Bobonaro, and Dili—where the GKTT expressed a need for foreign observers. We accompanied groups of voters on foot from their villages to the polls and stayed at polling stations throughout the balloting, allowing us to develop in depth knowledge of local conditions. In all locations we observed, we found the ballot process to be technically clean and honest. We saw no attempt to influence voters. In fact, absent pro-Indonesian interference, the percentage of votes in favor of independence might have been far higher than the 78.5% recorded.

We can find no words to express our horror at the violence that has ravaged East Timor since the referendum. Indonesian authorities are using armed militia groups as surrogates to devastate the territory. The only solution to this genocide lies in immediate, complete Indonesian withdrawal and placement of a UN-backed peacekeeping force in East Timor. The thousands of refugees who have fled, willingly or by force, to West Timor and elsewhere must be allowed food, medical care and safe return home. We appeal to the United States and the international community to continue pressure on the Indonesian government and military in the strongest possible terms. Foreign aid should be halted until Indonesia ends the terror and respects the result of the referendum.

As we were completing this report, we learned that Rev. Francisco de Vasconcelos, the General Secretary of the GKTT, was murdered by militia in Manutato, on the road from Dili to Baucau. Several observers from the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) who remained in East Timor after the evacuations were with Francisco at the time and did their best to bring him to medical assistance. It is to Francisco and thousands of other East Timorese martyrs for freedom that we dedicate this report. May we continue their struggle for a free and independent Timor LoroSae.

Miriam A. Young
Andrew Wells

Washington, DC
September 12, 1999



Delegation member Max Surjadinata (left) with GKTT General Secretary Francisco de Vasconcelos, on arrival in Dili on August 24 (photo: Andrew Wells)

THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD (August 24-26)

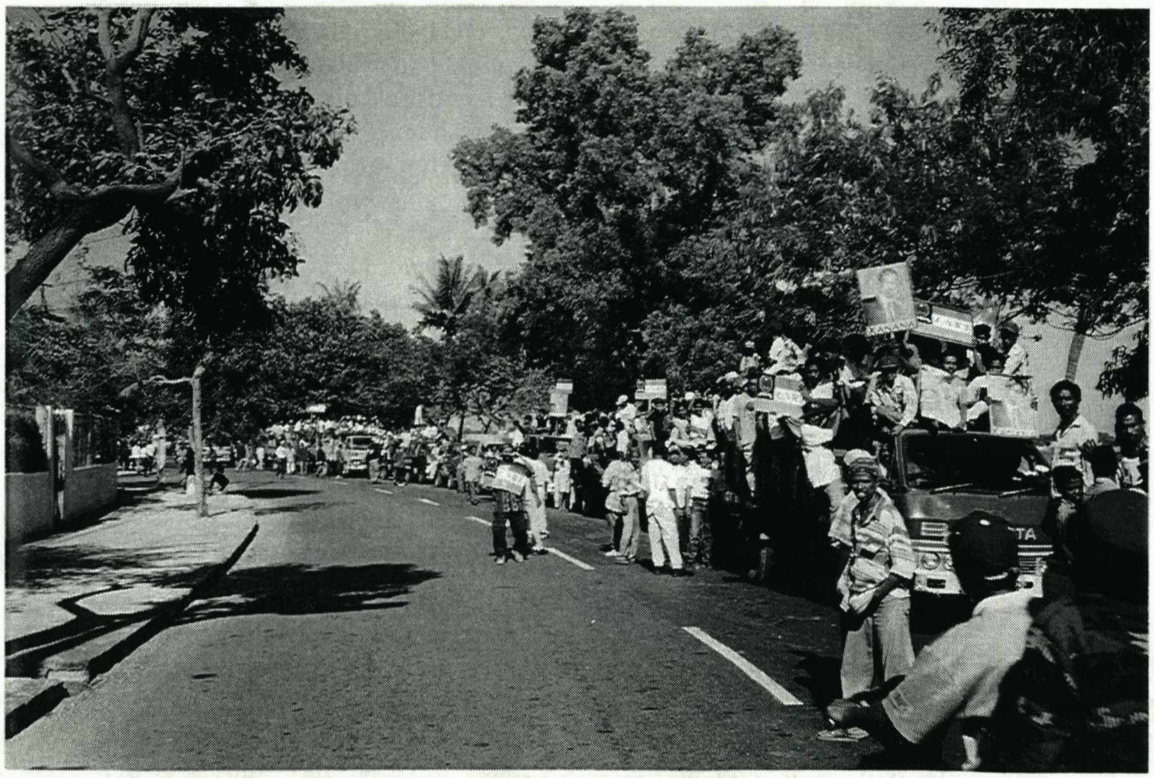
When the Asia Pacific Center delegation arrived in Dili on August 24, the process of registration for the UN-administered popular consultation had concluded and the 10-day campaign period had begun. The delegation witnessed large campaign rallies held by both the pro-independence CNRT (National Resistance Council of East Timor) and by pro-Indonesian autonomy groups. The contending parties had agreed to campaign on alternate days in Dili, for safety's sake. In other districts of East Timor, other agreements were made; depending on the relative strength of pro-Jakarta militias, independence supporters were sometimes unable to campaign freely.

Delegation member John Filiatreau (Louisville, KY) filed the following report for the Presbyterian News Service:

> On Wednesday, [August 25], an estimated 15,000 people gathered near Dili harbor for a celebration of the free East Timor that they have envisioned at least since the mid 1970s, when Portugal left its longtime colony and Indonesia's army promptly marched in and seized it.
>
> The Wednesday rally included a joyful procession of trucks and other utilitarian vehicles (anti-independence forces reportedly had used some of their Indonesian largesse to engage virtually all available taxis and buses), their shock absorbers bottomed out under the overflow loads of laughing and singing Timorese. It was a boisterous crowd, young and old, male and female, clearly confident of victory, whole families on hand to witness the birth of a nation. Hundreds of beaming children took part. There was no violence, but one top-heavy truck overturned, killing two riders.
>
> Many in the Wednesday crowd wore T-shirts and waved posters bearing photographs of Jose Alexandre Gusmao, known as Xanana, a legendary former leader of Falintil, the pro-independence guerrilla army. Gusmao, recently released from prison but still under house arrest in Jakarta, is considered the front-runner to become the first president of a free East Timor. In past years, anyone who dared to display his image risked arrest and torture, if not death; that his visage was so much in evidence during this rally is a measure of the pro-independence group's confidence.
>
> Thursday's rally for those who favor Timorese "autonomy" under Indonesian rule involved far fewer people—most onlookers felt that Australian TV's estimate of 12,000 was extremely generous—and took place in a decidedly different atmosphere. Most of the "otonomi" activists seemed glum or angry (it was widely reported that pro-autonomy leaders recruited some participants with gifts of money, hats and T-shirts, and some with threats of violence); most hands raised in salute were drawn into fists; and most groups of participants exuded aggression and menace. Very few women and children joined in. While security forces had been all but absent during the previous day's rally, the anti-independence procession included numerous police vehicles full of solemn-looking officers in riot gear brandishing U.S.-provided M-16 rifles.

By mid-morning, reporters gathered at the Hotel Turismo on the waterfront were trading rumors and reports of violence: Pro- and anti-independence forces had squared off downtown, the pro- crowd unarmed, the anti- group firing weapons, while the Indonesian policemen who are supposed to keep the peace did nothing to disarm the militiamen or to keep the groups apart; a photographer was shot in the leg, apparently by a militiaman armed with a (notoriously inaccurate) homemade pistol; a group of reporters was assaulted after being surrounded by a crowd chanting, "Kill them all! Kill them all! Australian journalists!"; a rampaging militia burned three houses and severely beat a 60-year-old woman trying to flee; a militiaman with a cane knife slashed the corpse of one of the victims. One man, wounded and bleeding profusely, was brought to the regional office of UNAMET—the United Nations Assistance Mission for East Timor—medics tried to save him but he died minutes later. In addition to the five who were killed on Thursday, six were injured, requiring treatment at a Dili clinic.

One group of militia fighters marched—provocatively, and in plain violation of election law—to the downtown headquarters of the CNRT, and tried to strike the CNRT flag. After beating up some CNRT supporters who resisted, they attacked the building, breaking windows and doing other minor damage.



Independence supporters line the streets of Dili, August 25 (photo: AW)

The Asia Pacific Center delegation personally witnessed several of the pro-autonomy attacks on August 26. Delegation members Bill Rose and Andrew Wells were approaching the UN Dili regional headquarters when a taxi pulled up to the guarded entrance to the compound carrying the body of Anastasio, the shooting victim mentioned in the article above. As gunshots—some of it from automatic weapons, used only by the Indonesian police and army—were heard in the vicinity of the UN office, Bill, Andrew and about 40 others were unable to leave the area for four hours until Dili quieted down. UN civilian police reports said that witnesses saw militia members armed with pistols, and behind them TNI and POLRI members in civilian clothes.

Several members of the delegation from the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI) were present at the CNRT office when it was attacked by the Aitarak militia. They witnessed three deaths nearby in which the victims were hacked by machetes after being shot.

A fifth victim was shot by Indonesian police on the street in the Becora neighborhood of Dili while watching the pro-autonomy rally go by; he died instantly. His extended family, including several young children, took refuge with the Asia Pacific Center delegation in our house in Delta Komoro, near the Dili airport.

POLLING DAY (August 30)

Following the conclusion of the campaign period, the delegation divided into four groups, each assigned to one district of western East Timor. Sites were selected in consultation with the GKTT in areas where GKTT churches were present, where a need for international observers was identified, and where voters were seen as at some risk of reprisals. Groups were divided as follows:

Ermera: John Campbell-Nelson, Bill Rose, Pete Ruggere, Andrew Wells
Liquica: Joy Balazo, John Filiatreau, Carlie Numi
Batugade (Bobonaro): John Chamberlin, Jay Losher, Gordon Ringenburg, Dick Witham
Becora (Dili): John Dunn, Max Surjadinata, Miriam A. Young

We chose to place ourselves in one or at most two polling centers throughout the day rather than roving from center to center. This allowed us to observe the process continuously, from the opening of the center to managing the large turnout, the actual voting, the sealing of the ballot boxes and transport to the counting center.

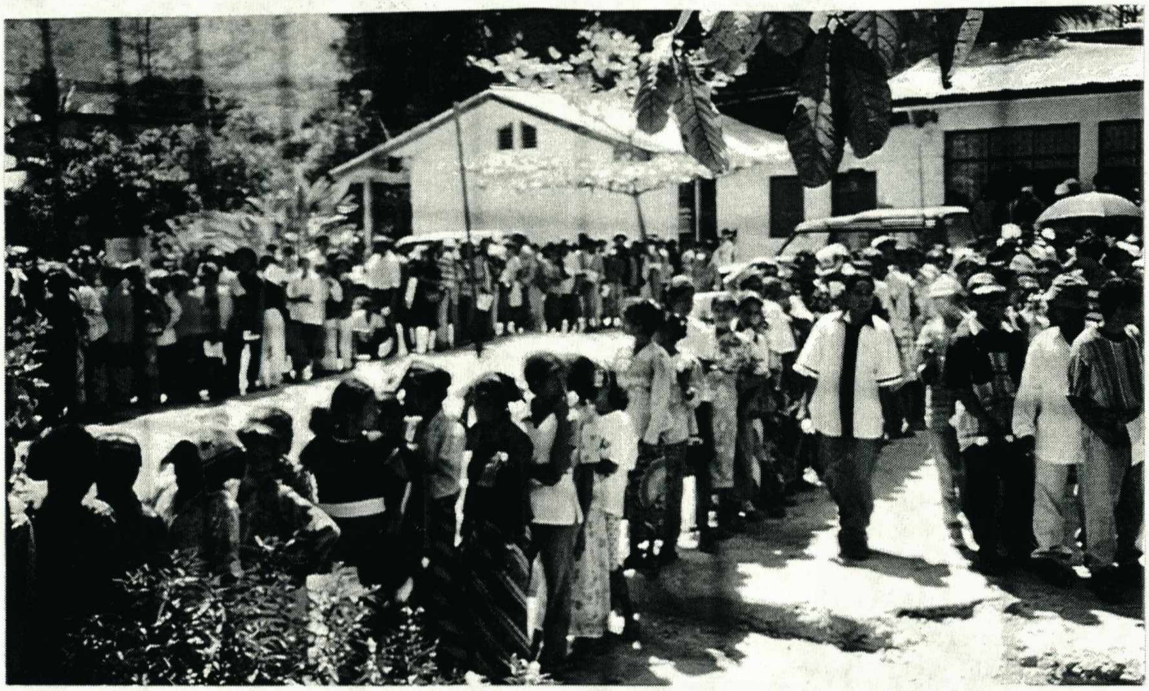
In all centers, we observed the process to be well organized. Both foreign and local UNAMET staff were conscientious in carrying out their tasks. We did not notice any instances of staff attempting to influence the voters in their choice. The variations among the different centers seemed to be the degree of pre-planning in managing the large numbers of voters, i.e. controlling queues, and the speed and efficiency with which the local staff processed the voters. The process went extremely slowly in some cases due to the carefulness of the staff person.

U- N-
ASIA PACIFIC CENTER
UNAMET
REGISTRATION / POLLING CENTRE
Pusat Pendaftaran / Pemberian Suara
Sentru-Rejistu / Vota-Fatin
Centro de Registo / Centro Eleitoral

Delegation leader Miriam A. Young at a polling center in Dili (photo: John Dunn)

Each polling station varied a bit in size and set-up, but generally there would be a straight table with 2-4 staff persons who checked the voter registration card with the voter's identification and checked their fingers for stain indicating that they might have already voted.

The voter's name would be crossed off a printed list (compiled from registration period), and they would be given a ballot paper that was folded in half once and stamped on the back. Behind a cardboard booth, the voter placed a mark on the upper half of the ballot to choose autonomy within Indonesia, or the bottom half which indicated a rejection of autonomy or independence. They then folded the ballot and placed it in a blue plastic ballot box that was watched by another UNAMET staff. The only persons allowed into a polling station room were the local staff, the voter and observers.



Voters line up early in the morning for their turn at the ballot boxes (photo: Miriam A. Young)

Voters arrived very early at all the centers observed by our group, many before the 6:30am official opening time. We observed a serious and reverential attitude among the people, who were dressed in their best clothes and behaved almost as if they were going to church. The most common confusion in the voting process seemed to be that some voters attempted to put their ballots through a cut-out hole in the cardboard voting booth, rather than carrying them out and placing them in the blue ballot box in the center of the room. A UNAMET staff person would then indicate the ballot box and direct the voter to retrieve the ballot and drop it in the proper place. Sometimes the staff person would do this for the voter, particularly when they were elderly, but always in full view of the voter and the observers.

Delegation member John Campbell-Nelson sent the following report from Ermera:

On Friday, August 27, we left Dili to begin getting acquainted with the areas where we would be observing the referendum. My group went to the coffee-growing region of Ermera, in the mountains southwest of Dili. After coordinating coverage of the various polling stations with other observer groups in the area, we settled on the two villages of Leorema and Railaku. There was a Protestant congregation in the village of Matata, which is located between our two polling stations, and we made that our base. The pastor there seemed to know just about everything that was happening and who was doing it, and his guidance proved invaluable. He told us that Leorema was a pro-independence stronghold, while Railaku was a base for the Aitarak militia. Matata was split down the middle, with a militia outpost on the hill just above the church.

Friday night there was a militia attack on Leorema which left one man seriously injured. Saturday afternoon, Andrew and I went up the hill to the militia camp to introduce ourselves, in the hope that the presence of observers might deter further attacks. To our surprise, we found a ragged group of farmers with few weapons, who were obviously frightened. The pastor later told us that many of them were members of the congregation, and that they had formed an Aitarak militia there mainly to keep out the Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron), a militia group that was considered much more vicious than Aitarak. Mostly they just acted tough to show the Indonesians they were doing their part. They attacked pro-independence people only half-heartedly, and only when they were forced to by the clandestine Indonesian Special Forces. That night there were a few guns fired at the stars, but no actual conflict.

On Sunday we attended worship. As we were shaking hands with the congregation afterward, a woman told the pastor, "Thank God they are here. Now perhaps we won't all be killed." In the afternoon we walked up the hill to Leorema, where Bill and I were to spend the night in order to be in place for the voting the next day. Andrew and Pete would cover Railaku. The pastor introduced us to village leaders, who welcomed us warmly and provided a room for the night. We learned that in Leorema was a group of 66 people who were registered to vote in Railaku, but were afraid to go there because of their known pro-independence sympathies. I asked if they would be willing to go if we accompanied them, and they agreed.

That night people began to gather in the village square, and they danced and sang until nearly dawn. When I arose at 5:00 hundreds were already waiting for the polls to open at 6:30. As I watched the sun come up over the mountains, someone said, "This is a good dawn to see."

I got a ride partway down the mountain and joined the group of 66 for the 12 kilometer walk down the mountain to Railaku. We wound through gardens and coffee groves, making good time despite the fact that many were carrying small children. Some even carried suitcases, planning to shelter in Dili immediately after casting their votes.

Accompanying voters to the polls in Raliaku, Ermera (photo: AW)

We arrived in Railaku at about 7:00 a.m., and already four neat lines stretched across the field in front of the polling place. Most of the voters came within an hour of the polls opening, and we later learned that the voter turnout had been more than 98 per cent throughout the territory. In contrast to the atmosphere of celebration at the campaign rally, today people were quiet, dressed in their Sunday best, and waiting reverently for the chance to cast their vote.

As I accepted a welcome cup of coffee from Giuseppe, the hyperstimulated Italian election officer, I noticed that to one side of the voting line was a group of perhaps 30 people who were visibly frustrated. He told me they were militia members and their families who had registered to vote in Leorema, but were afraid to go and had hoped to vote in Railaku instead. After verifying that this was not possible, I offered to accompany them back up the hill to Leorema, and then to stay with them until they had arrived safely home after the vote. They agreed, and I was soon in the back of a truck headed up the mountain again.

On arrival in Leorema, the truck was surrounded by pro-independence supporters. I explained the situation, and the militias were checked for weapons and allowed to proceed to the polling station without interference. However, when the voting was finished that afternoon, a group of young men approached me and explained that I could take the women, children and the old men back, but that they were going to hold several of the young men hostage as insurance against further militia attacks. I explained that I had just taken 66 pro-independence people down the hill to vote that morning, and if militias were held in Leorema, there was a danger that pro-independence people would be detained in Railaku. They quickly changed their minds and released their captives. We walked back together, and they insisted on delivering me to the church in Matata, where they thanked me and the pastor. "We would have been killed for sure," they said. I don't know whether that really would have happened, but the experience of accompanying these brave people up and down the mountain gave me a whole new sense of what it means to be a pastor.

Bill and I slept at the church that night. Andrew and Pete had gotten a ride to Gleno, the regional capital, where we were to be picked up the next day for the return trip to Dili. I was up before dawn again, enjoying the view from the ridge where the Matata church sits high above Gleno. The valley was blanketed with fog after the cold night. Beneath the fog I could see a strange red glow. As the sun rose and the fog melted away, I could see that buildings were burning in Gleno. Soon the UN helicopter flew over on its way to pick up the ballot boxes. It descended, we heard gunshots, and then it rose again immediately. We decided all was not well in Gleno.

After some discussion, Bill and I decided to walk down to Gleno to look for Andrew and Pete and try to telephone for a ride back to Dili. When we got to the asphalt road leading into town, the only traffic we found was an army truck heading the opposite direction. At the bridge leading into town, we walked into a militia roadblock. After a fair bit of negotiating, they agreed to deliver us to the military post on the other side of the bridge to get permission to enter the town. The local military commander seemed mildly amused and nodded us on. We learned that Pete and Andrew were at the UN compound, and the town had been taken over by militias. They would allow the UN international staff and observers to leave, but they wanted the East Timorese election workers turned over to the militia. The UN staff weren't about to let that happen.

The standoff lasted about eight hours, until just before sunset. We were in and out of the UN headquarters, up and down off the floor whenever shots were fired, and finally roasting in cars in the sun waiting to drive off. That was when I realized I hadn't had a chance to bathe in three days. The militias took the opportunity to burn a few more houses while we waited. The police stood a few yards away, smoking and joking.

The East Timorese woman sitting next to me in the car turned out to be a pro-independence leader whose house had been destroyed by soldiers looking for her the night before. I was supposed to hide her somehow if the militias checked our car. An Indonesian policeman wandered up to the car and looked in the window. Seeing the woman, he said, "Praise the Lord." Turning to the Australian driver, he said, "You know the meaning of friendship," and walked on. After our hearts resumed beating, the woman told us that he was the one who had saved her from the army the night before, and had smuggled her into the UN compound. He was a Christian whose mother was from Ambon and father from Irian Jaya--two islands whose people have also known the cruelty of the Indonesian army.

At sundown, our caravan finally pulled out. We traveled to Dili without further incident and were met by a storm of TV cameras.

EXCERPTS FROM REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

Polling Station # 41, Fatumasi, Liquica District[1]

We arrived about 6:20am to find a milling throng of 500 or more people waiting to vote. The UNAMET people had erected rope barriers to keep the crowd about 25 yards from the polling center. Voters were allowed to approach the voting stations four or five at a time. The voting continued without pause until the last of the registered voters cast their ballots around 2:50pm. [Polling centers were open from 6:30am to 4pm.]

The only road to the center (held in a public school) passed between a Brimob station and a local police station; armed officers watched from both stations, but seemed not to be speaking to or interfering with anybody. The schoolyard was guarded by armed Indonesian policemen. A group of men believed to be militia (one wore a BMP—Besi Merah Putih, or Red and White Iron militia—t-shirt) blocked the road on several occasions in the morning and afternoon with a thick bamboo pole but was not seen to refuse passage to anyone. We reported this to the CIVPOL (UNAMET civilian police), who went to look but found it had been removed. The road was "blocked" intermittently all day.

Out of 1,824 registered voters, 1,815 actually cast votes. A group of suspected militiamen spent the entire day in the schoolyard in a circle around their leader, a gray-haired man with mutton-chop side burns who was well known to the two CIVPOLs and the District Electoral Officers. These men did nothing overtly of a threatening or intimidating nature although their presence was conspicuous. They were among the last to vote.

The balling procedure seemed not to have been compromised in any way. The entire process was conducted in the presence of observers, who identified no problems or irregularities, with one exception: although they had been told repeatedly not to do so, the local UNAMET staff at both voting venues, under time pressure, persisted in folding and stamping several ballots at a time. Observers watched closely however, and feel sure that nothing happened that would affect the integrity of the vote. Also, all the ultraviolet readers and spares had stopped functioning by 10:30 or 11am. The staff continued as if they were operative, and as far as we could tell, none of the voters or spectators was aware that they had malfunctioned.

We feel that the voting was conducted in a fair and professional manner and that the results are valid. Seals were examined and found to be intact before the voting started and again shortly before we left. One UNAMET District Electoral Officer expressed the opinion that the presence of observers had helped to keep things calm, because the militia and police in the immediate area of the polling place knew they were being watched.

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[1] Also see the article on Fatumasi by John Filiatreau (Appendix II).

Polling Center # 175/202 Batugade, Bobonaro District

Careful observation for the whole day at the two polling centers in Batugade discovered no substantive violations of the prescribed procedures. However, even though the atmosphere during the hours of the vote was characterized by calm and a sense of safety, the period right before and after was punctuated by fear and intimidation. The area around Batugade is dotted with burned out or otherwise destroyed homes. There was a steady stream of refugees moving from and through Batugade both the days before and after the vote. Militia activity was much in evidence in Balibo, Maliana, along the road to Dili and in Batugade.

Polling Centers #181 Lihu/Railako, #183 Gleno, Ermera District and #25 Leorema, Liquica District (administered from Ermera)

Our team of four Americans observed three polling centers, including one in Liquica district, which was more easily reached from Ermera. We accompanied groups of voters on foot from their villages to the polls and stayed at polling stations throughout the balloting. In all locations we found the ballot process to be technically clean and honest. UNAMET staff, especially local East Timorese, performed their duties in a conscientious, unbiased fashion. While polling stations varied somewhat in formality and procedures, we found no instance where voting was affected.

We did, however, witness attempts by Indonesian authorities to influence the referendum. We interviewed local church and militia members who were paid in cash and rice. Armed police and militia remained within 100 meters of polling stations in Railako and Gleno throughout the day, in violation of electoral regulations. In Gleno, the leader of the *Darah Integrasi* militia strolled freely among voters waiting in line, even after he allegedly instigated a noon attack that left two people injured. The Gleno police sat and watched. In Railako, militia members waited until after the close of polling to make “complaints,” blockading the UNAMET convoy for several hours.

Polling Center #20 Dili Kamea (Becora)

This center had 3,300 registered voters, the largest number in Dili district. The District Electoral Officer requested us to stay throughout the day, which we did with the exception of one and a half hours in the afternoon. Ninety eight percent of the voters cast their ballot, and all of them had been processed by about 2pm.

During the afternoon, a young man who was registered at the next polling center, #19 in Hera, came to our center to say that he was afraid to travel there with his family because he had to pass through an area of *Aitarak* militia. One of our observers accompanied the CIVPOL and the UNAMET translator to the police station to request the police to provide security for him. The police commander refused, using a range of excuses such as not having a vehicle available, everyone being occupied with taking prisoners to vote (there were approximately 15 police officers in the station), and refusing to go by motorcycle because it was too dangerous. In the end, he and his family were taken to Hera by two observer vehicles travelling together, where he was able to vote. Arriving there around 3pm, this center had already finished with a 98% turnout.

Loading ballot boxes for transport to UN Headquarters (photo: MY)

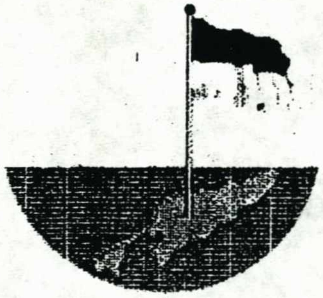
UNAMET

Do you ACCEPT the proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia?

Apakah anda MENERIMA usul otonomi khusus untuk Timor Timur di dalam Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia?

Ita Boot SIMU proposta autonomia espesiál ba Timor Lorosae iha Estadu Unitáriu Repúblika Indonezia nia laran?

Aceita a autonomia especial proposta para Timor Leste integrada no Estado Unitário da República da Indonésia?



ACCEPT
MENERIMA
HA'U SIMU
ACEITO
▼

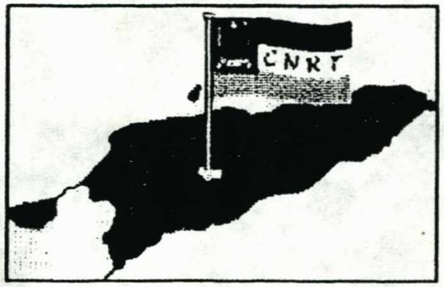
OR ATAU KA OU

Do you REJECT the proposed special autonomy for East Timor, leading to East Timor's separation from Indonesia?

Apakah anda MENOLAK usul otonomi khusus Timor Timur, yang akan mengakibatkan berpisahnya Timor Timur dari Indonesia?

Ita Boot LA SIMU proposta autonomia espesiál ba Timor Lorosae, nebé sei lori Timor Lorosae atu haketak an hosi Indonezia?

Rejeita a autonomia especial proposta para Timor Leste, levando á separação de Timor Leste da Indonésia?



REJECT
MENOLAK
HA'U LA SIMU
REJEITO
▼

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS AND VOTE COUNTING (September 2-3)

The day after the referendum, the United Front for East Timor Autonomy (UNIF) sent letters to UN chief Ian Martin and the three-member Electoral Commission, threatening to "withdraw from cooperation in the consultation" unless hearings were held to address their complaints. The Commission, operating independently from UNAMET and made up of electoral experts from South Africa, Ireland and South Korea, had been given the mandate to ensure proper conduct of the referendum and to determine whether the consultation reflected the popular will.

UNIF brought 22 representatives to the hearings, which were held at UN Headquarters and open to accredited international observers. At least seven members of the Asia Pacific Center delegation attended the sessions over the course of two full days. Pro-autonomy spokesperson Basilio Araujo registered complaints on behalf of UNIF, which was made up of the two pseudo-political parties created by the pro-autonomy side, BRTT and FPDK. UNAMET chief electoral officer Jeff Fisher answered the complaints for the UN. The dominant figure in the hearings, however, was Indonesian Ambassador Soleiman, the head of the official Indonesian observer delegation, who frequently intervened to speak on the militias' behalf.

UNIF's core complaint was that they were not directly involved in the balloting, and that UNAMET was therefore biased. The Electoral Commission established that adequate notice had been given to both pro-autonomy and pro-independence parties of the procedure for registering party agents, and that neither side had met the deadline. Doubtless, many of the UN local staff were themselves pro-independence (like 80% of the Timorese population). But of the numerous witnesses called by UNIF, none could substantiate the claim that UNAMET staff had actually instructed them to vote in favor of independence. Rather, a clear pattern of intimidation emerged on the part of UNIF. Witnesses had been instructed by UNIF to vote for autonomy, but went ahead and voted their consciences, after which UNIF claimed fraud.

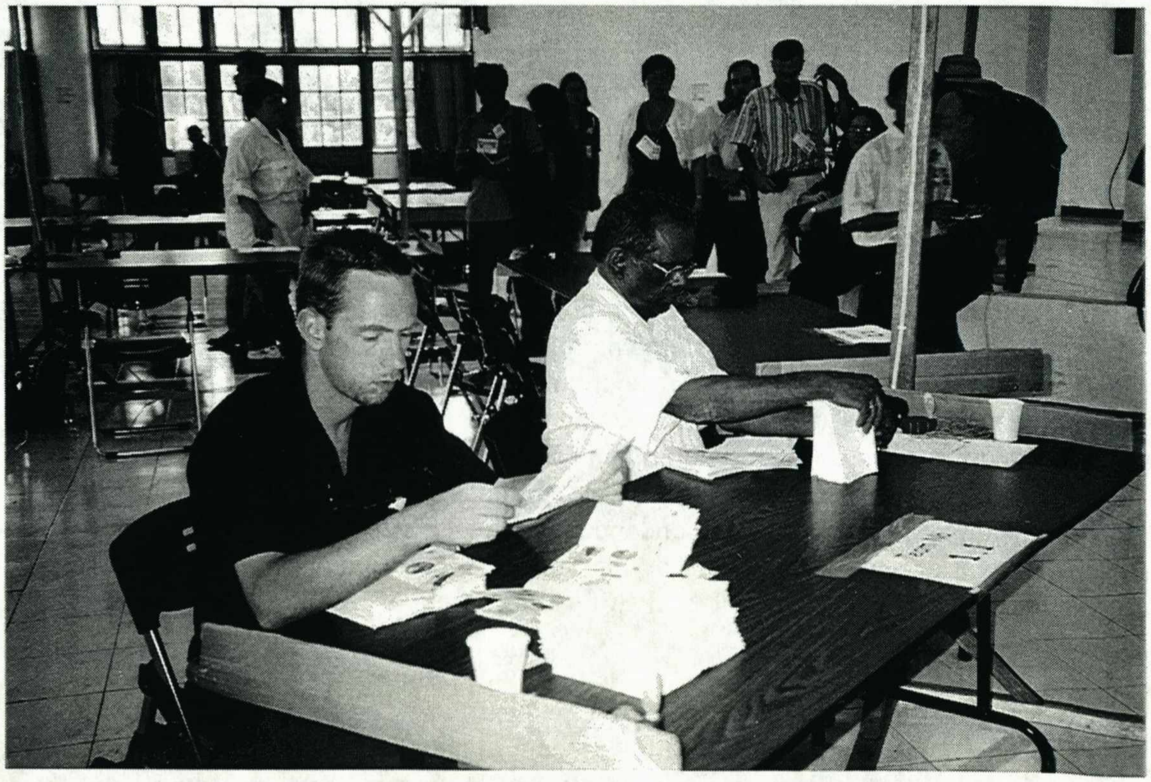
Both Araujo and Soleiman made much of the ballot's supposed lack of "transparency." Transparency, to them, meant a system where they could observe how each East Timorese voted, and then hold them accountable. None of their claims was substantiated by any independent observer group, including the Asia Pacific Center. For militia members to introduce procedural complaints against an electoral system which they did everything in their power to disrupt represented the height of hypocrisy. Ambassador Soleiman's threat that the pro-independence vote "will result in consequences" for UNAMET was answered eloquently by the South African commissioner: "If you reject the results of the consultation, you will suffer the consequences of history."

All of the ballot boxes, a total of 850, were brought from the regional centers to Dili at the close of the voting on August 30th or on the next day. The counting was done in a large recently built round-shaped building, meant to house a museum, located next to the main police station of Dili and close to the airport. Although heavy security was supposed to be provided, the counting center was surrounded for a few hours on Wednesday evening, September 1, by militia.

Reconciliation of the ballots was done on Wednesday and Thursday, September 1 and 2. Registration cards were matched against written and computerized lists of registered voters, and numbers of registration cards compared with numbers of ballots from each polling station. The entire counting process was open to accredited observers.

Once all of the ballots had been reconciled and placed in bundles of 100, they were placed in ten large crates called batching spaces. A batch of 100 ballots was collected from each batching space, thereby mixing the ballots from all regions of East Timor, so that the ballots in each counting batch came from all over the territory.

Actual counting of the ballots began in the afternoon of Friday, September 3. Once the counting was begun, it went on continuously until all ballots were counted. This took from approximately 1pm on Friday until 6:30am on Saturday, September 4. Counting was done by UNAMET electoral staff, in teams of twelve counters each. They worked in pairs counting 1000 ballots at a time, and placing spoiled ballots in a separate pile. The most common cause of a spoiled ballot was due to the voter having punched a hole through the folded ballot, thereby marking both options. The number of spoiled ballots might have been reduced through increased voter education, but the short time span given for implementing the registration and balloting probably made this impossible.



International observers monitor the beginning of the vote count (photo: MY)

The results of the ballot were announced simultaneously at 9pm on September 3 in New York and at 9am on September 4 in East Timor. Five members of the Asia Pacific Center delegation were present as UNAMET chief of mission Ian Martin made the announcement at a press conference in the Mahkota Hotel in Dili. The statement of the UN Secretary General on the results of the popular consultation was read in English, Indonesian, Portuguese and Tetum. Over 98% of eligible voters had come to the polls, in what must be a world record for election participation. In a decisively strong vote for independence, 78.5% of valid ballots had been marked against the Indonesian autonomy proposal (see the exact figures below).

VALID VOTES: 438,968

ACCEPT:	94,388	21.5%
REJECT:	344,580	78.5%

PERCENTAGES OF VALID VOTES.

INVALID VOTES: 7,985
1.8% OF TOTAL VOTES

POST-REFERENDUM VIOLENCE

Reprisals by militias and their supporters in the Indonesian army and police began almost immediately after the close of voting. Ermera was the scene of some of the first attacks, leaving two UN local staff dead and several others wounded. Over the course of the week following polling day, the security situation in East Timor progressively deteriorated. Militia groups moved from the western provinces (Maliana, Liquica, Ermera) into Dili and increased their terror there. Indonesian forces became increasingly less careful about their own participation. On Wednesday, September 1, the UN headquarters compound in Dili was attacked, trapping over several hundred refugees, UN staff, and observers inside for hours. Militia were also active outside the counting center. The Becora and Kaluhun neighborhoods on the eastern side of Dili, known pro-independence strongholds, were constant targets for house burnings and attacks. Many families from these areas, as well as Maliana, took refuge with the Protestant and Catholic churches.

After the announcement of the results on September 4, the violence intensified, to a point where no area of Dili was safe. Three delegation members attempted to travel to Bishop Belo's residence, but were turned back by militia roadblocks and nearby gunfire. The streets of Dili became deserted, as all shops were shut and residents fled either to West Timor, other areas of Indonesia, or into the hills. In the words of John Campbell-Nelson, "Each night brought more gunfire, more burning houses, and escalating tensions. By the time the referendum results were announced on Saturday, we had about thirty people sheltering in our house. The courageous pastor at the Protestant church in Dili had 80 people in his house, mostly women and children. His (mostly Indonesian) church council had told him he may not use church property to shelter refugees and advised him to get out of town. He replied, 'I'm a pastor and I can't turn anyone away. If I have to, I'll die here with them.'"

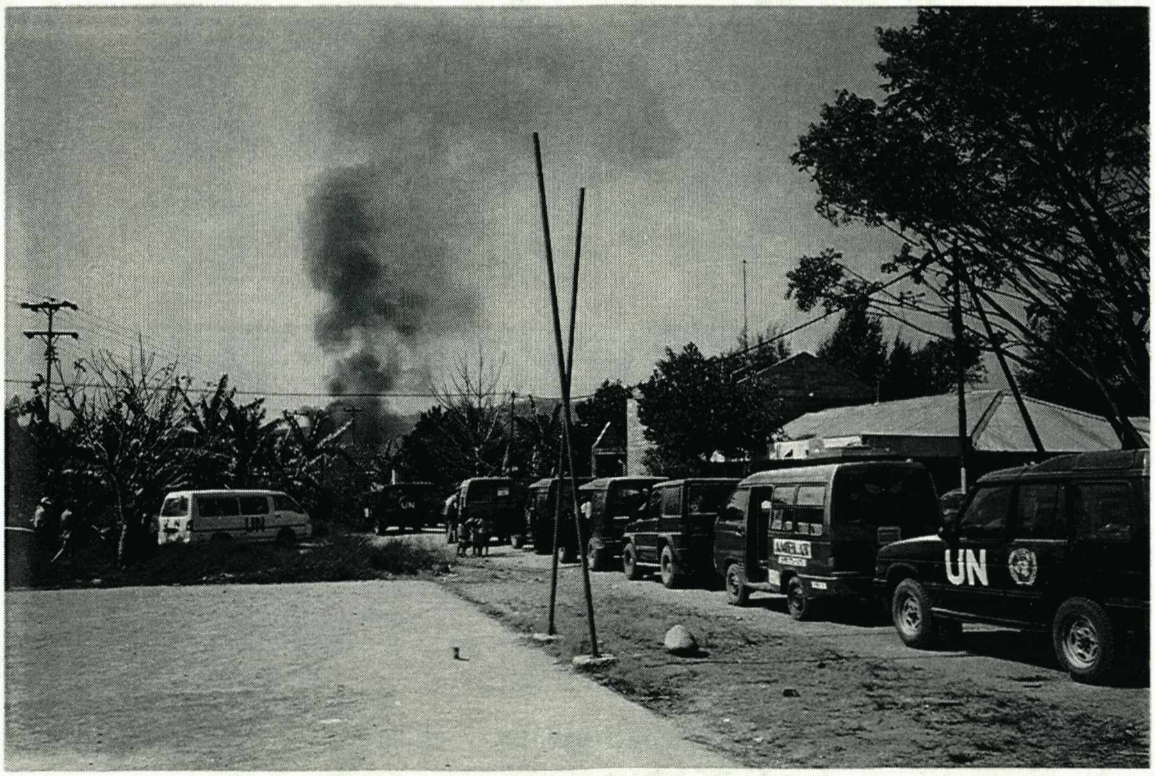
Delegation member Jay Losher wrote in an editorial submitted to the *Dallas Morning News*:

> Less than a day after the United Nations announced the results of a popular referendum on East Timor, the country changed from rugged and rustic tropical beauty to grisly scenes straight out of Joseph Conrad's ***Heart of Darkness***. In just one day, the smoke from hundreds of burning homes had already formed a pall over the countryside. Descriptions of the grossest violations of human rights have begun to emerge. In the capital city of Dili, the heads of slain pro-independence supporters are being displayed on pikes.
>
> Reports describe the road from Dili to Batugade, the main route for refugees leaving the capital, as being lined with hundreds of bodies and heads on sticks. The route is controlled by the infamously brutal BMP militia.
>
> Pastors, both Catholic and Protestant, are being targeted. Bishop Belo, the Nobel laureate and head of the Catholic Church of East Timor, has had to flee after an attack on his residence leaving dozens of refugees dead. Other clergy are fearful

for their lives and for the safety of their families. These fears are well founded, for there is abundant evidence of death squad activities.

What should be done? What can be done? If there ever was a sound case for humanitarian intervention to stop widespread murder, this is it. The UN must send in peacekeeping troops, with or without Indonesian consent. And the UN must be persuaded to act in hours rather than weeks. The US Administration and our elected representatives need to support such a move -- through our voice in the UN, and to support it with our own troops to supplement an international peacekeeping force. The Secretary of Defense should cut off all military aid to Indonesia until it removes its troops from East Timor and disbands the militias. The World Bank should suspend all financial assistance to Indonesia until it complies with demands to end the violence in East Timor.

Indonesia [objects that its troops are] acting to quell the violence, albeit slowly and ineffectively... The reality is quite different. The pro-integration militias themselves are, for all practical purposes, an extension of the Indonesian military – in fact, under the employ of the Indonesian military; indeed, organized and directed by the military.



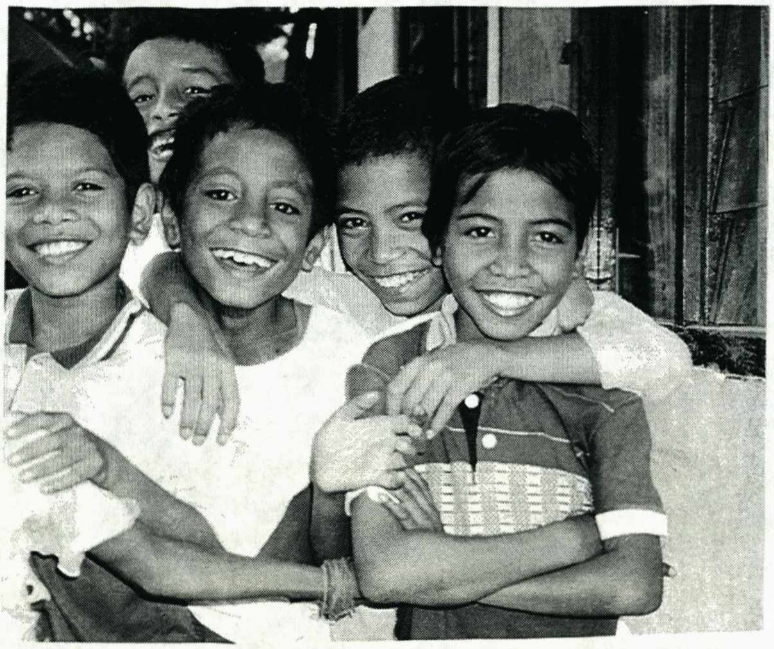
Houses burn in Gleno, Ermera, as a UN convoy is blocked (photo: AW)

RETURN HOME

Most of the Asia Pacific Center delegation was scheduled to depart on September 7. With the support of an incredibly courageous pastor's wife, two members went overland to West Timor on September 4, soon after the results of the vote were announced. She got the necessary letter of permission from the militias, and the caravan leaving Dili ran a gauntlet of militia roadblocks all the way to the border.

That night, increasing amounts of gunfire came around the supposedly safe neighborhood of Delta Komoro where the delegation was staying. We contemplated an evacuation, along with other observer groups and US and Canadian consular officials. Foreign observers and press were leaving by whatever means they could. Nearly everyone felt a burden of guilt at leaving the East Timorese to face the violence alone. We realized that evacuating played right into the hands of the Indonesians—they don't want witnesses there for the atrocities they are committing. It was dangerous and unproductive to stay, and we were trapped in our own houses, unable to go outside because of the danger.

Around 2:00 AM, the house where Joy Balazo, John Dunn, and Bill Rose were staying was attacked, with stones thrown through the windows and bullets shot into the front door. The police were in the area but did nothing. The three were badly shaken and were taken to the Australian Consulate. They managed to leave East Timor on a flight the next day, along with most of the rest of the delegation. Three members initially elected to stay, but as the situation deteriorated further, it became clear that our presence was no longer able to be helpful to our partners. On Sunday evening, September 5, they boarded a Portuguese government charter for Bali and Jakarta.



The future of East Timor (photo: MY)

The People of East Timor Vote in the Face of Violence

Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace
September 1, 1999

On August 30, the people of East Timor defied pervasive fear and intimidation and cast their ballots in massive numbers for the territory's future. Over 98% of registered voters turned out at the polling stations observed by the Asia Pacific Center delegation; similar numbers were recorded by United Nations staff throughout East Timor. Entire villages arrived at polling centers together and waited patiently for hours in the sun for their turn to vote. The reverential atmosphere surrounding the vote reflected the admonitions of Bishop Belo and other religious leaders for the East Timorese to vote their conscience. Their courage and determination deserve international applause and support.

The United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) carried out a logistically difficult operation under hostile conditions. In all locations we observed, we found the ballot process to be technically clean and honest. UNAMET staff, especially local East Timorese, performed their duties in a conscientious, unbiased fashion. While polling stations varied somewhat in formality and procedures, we found no instance where voting was affected. When voters needed explanation of the ballot, this was given impartially. We saw no attempt to influence voters.

Indonesian authorities, however, attempted to influence the referendum at all levels. We observed villagers trucked by coercion to pro-"autonomy" rallies during the campaign period and brought by Indonesian police across the border with West Timor to vote. We interviewed militia who were paid in cash and rice. Pro-Indonesian T-shirts and hats were handed out widely. In several locations, armed police and local militia leaders remained close to polling stations throughout the day, in violation of electoral regulations. Local militia, pro-independence and religious leaders are certain that Indonesian military provide the motivating force behind these cases of intimidation.

We observed blatant disregard by the Indonesian police (POLRI and BRIMOB) for their security obligations under Article 3 of the May 5th bilateral agreement. In the town of Gleno, Ermera district, four members of our delegation were held hostage yesterday along with UNAMET staff. We heard automatic weapons, believed by local residents to come from Kopassus special forces, firing on the UN helicopter as it attempted to retrieve the ballot boxes. Militia burned houses and blocked a UN convoy for over seven hours. Heavily armed police refused to intervene at any point.

Such violence continues to occur after the referendum. Our concern extends in particular to local UNAMET staff who are the targets of Indonesia-backed reprisals. Responsibility for their security lies solely with the Indonesian police. Yet Indonesian authorities encourage militia groups to remain armed, using them as surrogates to destabilize the territory. The militia in themselves are not the problem; the fundamental conflict lies between the Indonesian military and the East Timorese people. Therefore, we strongly oppose sending any further Indonesian troops to East Timor. Indeed, if Indonesia would withdraw its forces, we believe militia violence would cease.

We appeal to the United States and the international community to exert pressure on the Indonesian government and military in the strongest possible terms. Foreign aid should be halted until Indonesia ends violence against UN personnel and respects the result of the referendum. An increased security role for the UN in East Timor is imperative. We call for an end to Indonesian interference so that the East Timorese people can work together for a peaceful future.

****

The Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace is a non-profit advocacy organization based in Washington, DC. Our ecumenical observer delegation to East Timor includes members of the National Council of Churches (USA) East Timor Working Group along with representatives of other denominations. We are hosted by the Christian Church of East Timor (GKTT). Our team of 14 chose to concentrate our efforts in four districts of East Timor - Ermera, Liquica, Bobonaro, and Dili where the GKTT expressed a need for foreign observers. We accompanied groups of voters on foot from their villages to the polls and stayed at polling stations throughout the balloting, allowing us to develop in depth knowledge of local conditions.

Contact: Miriam Young
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Immediate Release
Monday, 6th of September, 1999

Urgent Appeal of Observer Missions Forced to Leave East Timor

On the 30th of August 1999, the East Timorese people voted by an overwhelming majority for independence. This occurred despite the general climate of intimidation and coercion created by Indonesian military backed militias. As international observers accredited by the United Nations, we witnessed the courage and determination of the East Timorese.

The Government of Indonesia has recognized the result of the poll and has stated that it represents the will of the East Timorese. Yet in spite of this official recognition, the Indonesian military and their proxy militias have intensified their campaign of terror and violence. Even before the announcement of the results, we witnessed the burning of houses, indiscriminate as well as targeted killings, and attacks against UNAMET personnel, foreign observers and journalists. Thousands of people are fleeing their homes and seeking refuge in churches and in the mountains.

Yesterday, on the 5th of September, we, along with many foreigners, were forced to leave East Timor. The same day, at a press conference at Dili's airport, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and General Wiranto were giving renewed assurances that the Indonesian police were responsible for maintaining security in East Timor and that they would fulfill their responsibilities.

But even as they spoke, the buildings of the Dili Diocese were on fire with at least 20 people killed inside, the Makhota hotel was burning, the headquarters of UNAMET were surrounded, and two foreign observers were being attacked by militias.

If the remaining UNAMET personnel and the few foreign observers and journalists still in the territory should leave, the Timorese people will be left alone to be slaughtered without witnesses. It is clear to us that this is precisely the intention of those who are unwilling to accept the results of the ballot.

We, therefore, appeal to the United Nations to deploy a peace enforcement mission immediately, in order to stop the bloodshed and save the lives of the Timorese people.

In case the Security Council is unable to take such measures, we strongly urge the United States, Australia and the European Union to envisage the immediate launching of an armed operation on humanitarian grounds.

Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace
Centro de Informacao e Documentacao Amilcar Cabral
International Platform of Jurists for East Timor
Liga dos Amigos de Timor
Peace is Possible in East Timor

Asia Pacific Center
for Justice and Peace

September 7, 1999

East Timor

URGENT ACTION ALERT

Please call President Clinton, your Senators and Representative urgently and tell them the US must pressure Indonesia to give up its security responsibilities in East Timor and allow a United Nations-endorsed international armed intervention force to step in.

Points:

A human tragedy is underway in East Timor. Almost all foreigners have been forced out of the territory, leaving no one to witness the slaughter of innocent people. Thousands of Timorese have fled their homes and villages and are taking refuge in religious sites or in the mountains. An untold number have already been killed.

Nobel Laureate Bishop Carlos Belo's house in Dili has been burned to the ground and the 3000 refugees taking refuge in his compound have been forced out and taken away - no one knows where.

The Asia Pacific Center had an observer delegation present for the ballot. The delegation was forced to leave before schedule. Before leaving, members witnessed burning of buildings, armed militias roaming the streets of Dili and other towns in view of police and military, the elite military force Kopassus firing on UN helicopters; journalists, UNAMET personnel and all foreigners threatened and attacked.

It is clear that Indonesia either cannot or will not fulfill its responsibilities for maintaining security in East Timor. Its leaders have issued nothing but words ever since the May 5th agreement.

- Indonesia MUST be pressured to step back and allow in a United Nations-endorsed armed international force to take over the role of security and save the lives of the East Timorese people.
- Indonesia must NOT be given any more chances to control the situation. Every hour of delay is that many more lives lost.
- The international community must act NOW to stop further bloodshed in the territory.

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for Justice and Peace

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Style

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1999

BY DUDLEY M. BROOKS—THE WASHINGTON POST

The Rev. Peter Ruggere protests at the Indonesian Embassy.

Soul-Searching In East Timor

Priest Flees Violence but Not Memories

By PETER CARLSON
Washington Post Staff Writer

After a few pops of palm wine, the men in the little mountain village in East Timor loosened up enough to ask Father Peter Ruggere the question that hung heavy on their minds: *Are they going to come and kill us?*

It was the night before the Aug. 30 referendum on independence for East Timor and Ruggere, a Maryknoll priest based in Washington, had come to the village as an official United Nations election observer. And now these men were repeating a rumor Ruggere had already heard: If the Timorese voted for independence, the Indonesians would invade, as they did in 1975, when they conquered the former Portuguese colony, killing thousands in the process.

Don't worry, Ruggere reassured them. "In 1975, nobody knew about East Timor. But the world is watching now. *We're* here." He pointed to his UN badge. "They can't get away with

See RUGGERE, *C4, Col. 1*

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Bearing Witness in East Timor

RUGGERE, *From C1*

it this time."

Telling that story on Wednesday, a few hours after returning from East Timor, Ruggere smiles at his naivete. After spending a week hiding from rampaging Indonesian-backed militiamen, he's safe at home but far less optimistic about East Timor.

Ruggere, 57, has been a missionary in Third World countries for most of his adult life—serving in Peru and Egypt, among other places—but nothing quite prepared him for his adventures in Timor. He sits in Maryknoll House on 16th Street NW, still amazed by the story.

"There's a surreal quality to all this," he says.

He arrived a couple of days before the referendum, part of a 12-person U.S. team of observers. The first hint that things might not be right was their housing. They were ensconced in a big home in a wealthy section of Dili. But the place had no furniture. The rich Indonesians who owned the place had fled, taking all their possessions with them. Ruggere and his fellow observers slept on the floor. It was uncomfortable, but he didn't mind. "It was an adventure," he says.

He was dispatched to the tiny town of Matata, where he heard the rumor about a possible Indonesian invasion. The next morning, he hiked down the steep mountain to take his post at the polling place in Railaco. It was packed with people. They looked solemn and serious and perhaps a bit frightened. "These were people who had never voted in their lives," he says.

The voting went smoothly and when the polls closed, Ruggere and another observer set out on foot for the small city of Gleno, where they were scheduled to spend the night. It was a hike of several miles, so they flagged down a passing truck. It stopped. It was filled with men wearing combat boots and military hats—but no uniforms—and carrying automatic rifles.

"Don't make eye contact and don't look at the guns," Ruggere, a veteran of Third World dictatorships, advised the other observer.

The truck dropped them off in Gleno. They found the house where they were staying, took a shower and headed out for dinner. But it was dark now, and bands of thuggish men strutted the streets. A sympathetic passerby silently signaled them: *Go back.* They returned to their house to find the caretakers gone. They slept without dinner, arose at dawn and went in search of breakfast. A few blocks away, a British UN worker stopped them. Two observers had been beaten up in the marketplace, she said. Go to the UN headquarters immediately.

They obeyed and found the place packed with Timorese election workers, who were visibly frightened. A helicopter flew in to pick up the referendum ballots. When it tried to land, it was driven off by gunfire. A while later, it returned and was driven off again. On its third attempt, it managed to land, pick up the ballots and zoom off.

"It was beginning to dawn on us that we should be afraid," Ruggere says, smiling.

At mid-morning, Ruggere and the other election workers piled into cars and headed off in a convoy for Dili, an hour away. They didn't get far. The militia stopped them before they got out of Gleno and held the convoy hostage.

At dark the militia released the convoy, and the frightened drivers stomped on the gas, racing down the twisting mountain roads. "It was really frightening," Ruggere says.

Back in Dili, he returned to the house with no furniture, ate a bowl of soup—his first meal in two days—and slept on the floor again.

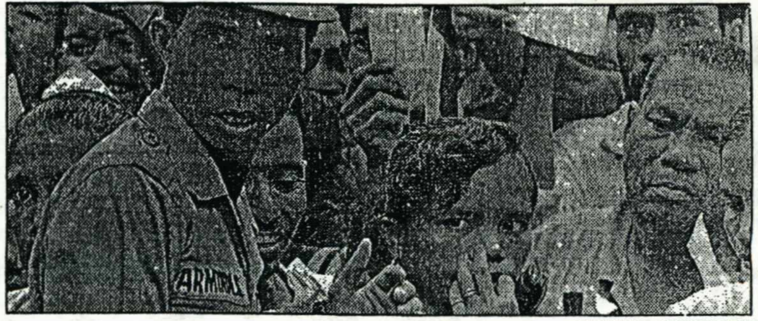
The city had a spooky feel. Their driver disappeared. They hired another, but he never showed up. Taxis were scarce. Stores were closed. For a few days, they lived on crackers and coffee. At night, they awoke to the sound of gunfire. They'd get up, look out, see nothing, slowly fall asleep again, then wake to more gunfire.

They kept the house dark to avoid attention and huddled inside, listening to the radio. Broadcasts from Australia spoke of mobs burning houses and shooting people. Folks from the UN team and the U.S. Embassy called to tell similar stories.

A frightened Timorese family arrived. Their home had been burned, and they needed sanctuary. They got it. Then a second family came. One family had four kids; the other had nine. Their parents seemed to think they'd be safe if they were with the foreigners. Ruggere wasn't so sure.

A few blocks away, a mob threw rocks through the windows and fired shots into a house full of Australian election observers. The police watched. The Australians called their embassy. The embassy called the cops. The cops—who'd done nothing to stop the attack—escorted the Australians to the airport.

Last Saturday, Ruggere tried to get to the office of Dili's Catholic bishop, Nobel Peace Prize winner Carlos Belo. He found a cabbie willing to make the trip. But soon they heard automatic weapons fire, a lot of it, very loud and very close. The cabbie turned around and took Ruggere back to the house with no furniture, where life would have been dull if it wasn't so frightening.



BY ED WRAY—ASSOCIATED PRESS

East Timorese voters press in on a guard during elections in June.

"You're worried and you're tired and it's boring," he says, "and you can't read because you can't turn the lights on. You fall asleep and the gunshots wake you up."

On Sunday the foreign press was leaving Dili, and Ruggere and his companions decided they had better flee, too. Ruggere broke the news to the Timorese families.

"I told the father, 'We're leaving.' He said, 'You're abandoning us.' I said, 'It's better for you because they're looking for the foreigners.' He didn't buy that. He saw us as their shield. 'What about us?' he said. I didn't have an answer. I couldn't look at him. I said goodbye. There was no shaking of hands. He was angry."

At the airport, everything was so normal that it was strange. A charter plane arrived and carried the press away. Another came and hauled off the foreign observers.

"The object was to drive out the foreign eyes—first the press and then us," Ruggere says.

He flew to Bali, then Hong Kong, then Los Angeles, then Washington, arriving Wednesday morning.

Now, eight hours later, he's sitting at home, telling his story, his black priest's shirt unbuttoned almost to his middle-age gut. He glances at his watch. It's time to go to the Indonesian Embassy. There's a protest there, and he promised he'd go.

He gets up, drives to Dupont Circle and parks his old Chevy Lumina in a space reserved for diplomats. He walks to the embassy, buttoning his shirt as he goes. He joins a scraggly picket line of a couple dozen protesters, many carrying white crosses. An organizer asks him to speak and hands him a bullhorn.

"I just arrived this morning from East Timor," Ruggere tells the protesters. "The election was fair. Ninety-eight percent of those registered voted. In spite of fears and rumors, they voted. They voted overwhelmingly for independence. Unfortunately, the Indonesian authorities have now allowed terror to take over. They have their goons on the streets, and they are burning houses and killing people. The press has left. The foreign observers have left. The only way Indonesia will respond is through economic pressure."

Ruggere speaks for only a few minutes, and then the demonstrators march toward the State Department. Ruggere doesn't go with them. He climbs into his car and drives back to Maryknoll House.

Inside, a cook is serving dinner to three priests. Ruggere joins them. The men stand at the table, hands folded, as one priest says a quick prayer. Then they sit down to eat. They haven't seen Ruggere since he left for East Timor.

"So," one priest says with a sly smile. "How was your trip?"

Turnout Extremely Heavy in East Timor Freedom Vote

(Presbyterian News Service, August 31)

by John Filiatreau

Fatumasi, East Timor - Along the winding road to this remote high mountain village, where the people walk among clouds, voters began materializing out of the mist long before sunup, in small groups strung out along the roadside - women with babies in slings at their hips; old men leaning heavily on walking sticks; matriarchs dressed in their brightly colorful Sunday best; and dozens of children laughing and dancing on matchstick legs, amazed and delighted to see so many people in one place at one time.

They had come to take part in an up-or-down vote on "merdeka" – liberty for East Timor, an island nation of about 840,000 people at the eastern end of Indonesia. If the "yes" votes prevailed, East Timor would become an independent nation; otherwise it would continue to be ruled by Indonesia, which seized it violently in 1975 after its colonial ruler, Portugal, withdrew.

By the time the polls opened in Fatumasi, at 6:30 Monday morning, a milling crowd of more than 500 people had gathered in the village schoolyard, and the United Nations civilian policeman assigned to the polling station, a smiling giant from New Zealand named Wayne Dwyer ("Wine Dwor"), was already learning that in this culture there are no rules regarding behavior in queues. But all the pushing and shoving occasioned no hostility; whenever someone managed to squeeze to the front of the line, the others hooted and clapped their hands as if to salute his or her initiative.

The mood was buoyant, but not quite festive. Many of the people seemed solemn, even grave, as they awaited their turns in the voting booth. Some waited in the glaring sun for four hours or more, shading themselves with their voter-registration forms, or lining up in such a way that each person's body provided a bit of shade for the next. The waiters' patience never failed, there was not a single loss of temper all day.

One very elderly woman in a bright sarong of many colors emerged from the polling station after voting, and, with tears in her eyes, sought out election workers one by one, and, bowing deeply, kissed their hands.

The United Nations Assistance Mission for East Timor (UNAMET), which managed the voting, had feared that anti-independence militias' threats of violence would keep many registered voters away from the polls in all parts of the country. In some cases, militia spokesmen had said that they would murder anyone who cast a vote. And the Indonesian police charged with maintaining security for the balloting have shown repeatedly that they are unable or unwilling to keep the militias in check.

In Fatumasi, part of the troubled Liquisa district, would-be voters had to walk along a road between a local police station and a building occupied by the feared Indonesian Mobile Brigade; both were full of unsmiling men bearing automatic weapons. Upon entering the schoolyard, they walked past a gaggle of pro-Indonesia militiamen gathered around their garrulous leader, into an area guarded by armed Indonesian soldier/policemen. The road was blocked intermittently by militiamen who extended a big bamboo pole across it; apparently, no one was turned back, but all were reminded which side was in control in Fatumasi.

All efforts to keep people away were unsuccessful. Of 1,824 registered voters in the district, 1,815 cast ballots. One registered voter had died. Only eight people failed to show up. (However, four of 20 natives hired to help at the polling station were absent, although they were to be paid an amount equal to two months' pay for the average East Timorese. It was not clear what had kept them away.)

The only problem at Fatumasi was crowd control, which kept two local "queue controllers" and Officer Dwyer busy from beginning to end. At one point Dwyer said that if the crowd didn't get more mannerly, "someone is going to have my 10-and-1-half Es (boots) imprinted on his backside." Whenever Dwyer got demonstrative, the crowd clapped and laughed; it was hard to tell who was having the better time.

The UNAMET staff, including District Electoral Officers John Gattorn, of Washington, D.C., and Kirstine Vanderput, of Belgium, who with dozens of other UNAMET employees had spent two months in the area, educating and registering voters, allaying fears and trying to keep the peace, were ecstatic about the turnout and the smoothness of the operation.

"This is perfect," Vanderput said just after noon, by which time it was clear that turnout would be high. "This is beyond my wildest expectations. I can't believe this day has finally come."

"Unbelievable," said Gattorn. "This is my fifth election as a monitor, and it's absolutely the best. We haven't had to turn one person away." In one of the four voting stations in Fatumasi, the turnout was 100 percent. Vanderput picked up the register for that station and danced for TV cameramen.

The voting day was remarkably free of trouble and violence. Unofficial reports from elsewhere in East Timor suggested that turnout was very high in every part of the territory. UNAMET officials said that and the relative dearth of violence and terror were in part a tribute to the international force of about 2,000 election observers who appeared at every voting center and also patrolled the roads to check for roadblocks or other interference.

In Fatumasi, the balloting was virtually finished by 2:50 p.m., an hour and 10 minutes before the polls closed. Gattorn said UNAMET was anxious to clear the area before dark, which comes about 6, "for security reasons." The ballots were to be taken to Dili, the capital, to be counted. UNAMET officials said the result of the "popular consultation" would probably be announced in about a week.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA AND THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC ON THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

The Governments of Indonesia and Portugal,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV), 1541(XV), 2625(XXV) and the relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly on the question of East Timor;

Bearing in mind the sustained efforts of the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal since July 1983, through the good offices of the Secretary-General, to find a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor;

Recalling the agreement of 5 August 1998 to undertake, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, negotiations on a special status based on a wide-ranging autonomy for East Timor without prejudice to the positions of principle of the respective Governments on the final status of East Timor;

Having discussed a constitutional framework for an autonomy for East Timor on the basis of a draft presented by the United Nations, as amended by the Indonesian Government;

Noting the position of the Government of Indonesia that the proposed special autonomy should be implemented only as an end solution to the question of East Timor with full recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor;

Noting the position of the Government of Portugal that an autonomy regime should be transitional, not requiring recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor or the removal of East Timor from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories of the General Assembly, pending a final decision on the status of East Timor by the East Timorese people through an act of self-determination under United Notions auspices;

Taking into account that although the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal each have their positions of principle on the prepared proposal for special autonomy, both agree that it is essential to move the peace process forward, and that therefore, the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal agree that the Secretary-General should consult the East Timorese people on the constitutional framework for autonomy attached hereto as an annex;

Bearing in mind that the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal requested the Secretary-General to devise the method and procedures for the popular consultation through a direct, secret and universal ballot;

Agree as follows:

Article 1

Request the Secretary-General to put the attached proposed constitutional framework providing for a special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary Republic of Indonesia to the East Timorese people, both inside and outside East Timor, for their consideration and acceptance or rejection through a popular consultation on the basis of a direct, secret and universal ballot.

Article 2
Request the Secretary-General to establish, immediately after the signing of this Agreement, an appropriate United Nations mission in East Timor to enable him to effectively carry out the popular consultation.

Article 3
The Government of Indonesia will be responsible for maintaining peace and security in East Timor in order to ensure that the popular consultation is carried out in a fair and peaceful way in an atmosphere free of intimidation, violence or interference from any side.

Article 4
Request the Secretary-General to report the result of the popular consultation to the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as to inform the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal and the East Timorese people.

Article 5
If the Secretary-General determines, on the basis of the result of the popular consultation and in accordance with this Agreement, that, the proposed constitutional framework for special autonomy is acceptable to the East Timorese people, the Government of Indonesia shall initiate the constitutional measures necessary for the implementation of the constitutional framework, and the Government of Portugal shall initiate within the United Nations the procedures necessary for the removal of East Timor from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories of the General Assembly and the deletion of the question of East Timor from the agendas of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Article 6
If the Secretary-General determines, on the basis of the result of the popular consultation and in accordance with this Agreement, that the proposed constitutional framework for special autonomy is not acceptable to the East Timorese people, the Government of Indonesia shall take the constitutional steps necessary to terminate its links with East Timor thus restoring under Indonesian law the status East Timor held prior to 17 July 1976, and the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal and the Secretary-General shall agree on arrangements for a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority in East Timor to the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall, subject to the appropriate legislative mandate, initiate the procedure enabling East Timor to begin a process of transition towards independence.

Article 7
During the interim period between the conclusion of the popular consultation and the start of the implementation of either option, the parties request the Secretary-General to maintain an adequate United Nations presence in East Timor.

DONE in New York on this 5th day of May, 1999.

For the Government of Indonesia:

/s/
Ali Alatas
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

For the Government of Portugal:

/s/
Jaime Gama
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal

Witnessed:

/s/
Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General
United Nations

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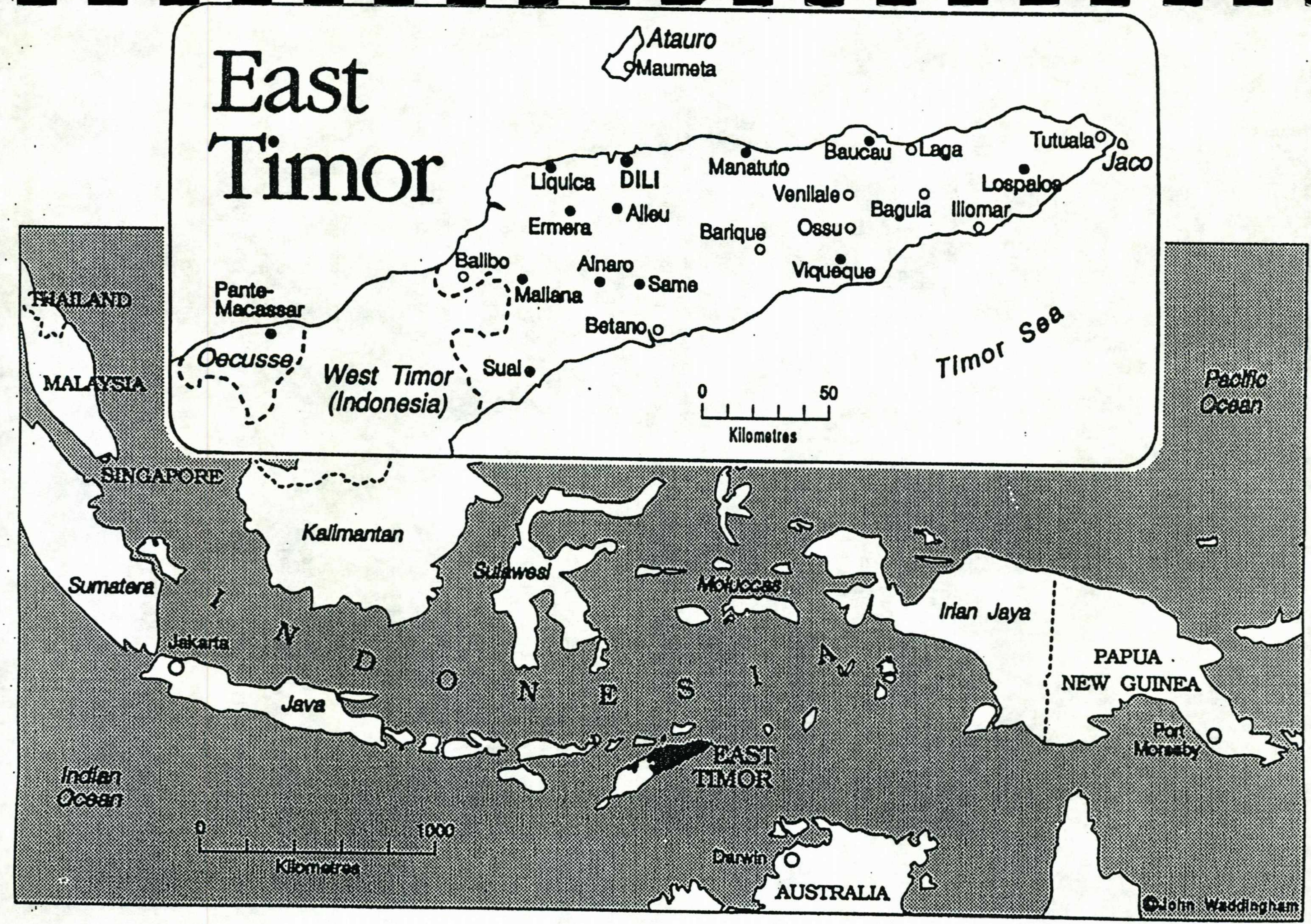
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